

DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 434 701

JC 990 635

AUTHOR Moeller, M. Valeriana; Snider, R. Michael; Owen, Polly
TITLE Can a College Structure Enhance Learning?
INSTITUTION Columbus State Community Coll., OH.
PUB DATE 1999-03-00
NOTE 8p.; Paper presented at the Annual 1999 International Conference of The Chair Academy (8th, Long Beach, California, March 3-6, 1999).
PUB TYPE Reports - Descriptive (141) -- Speeches/Meeting Papers (150)
EDRS PRICE EDRS Price MF01 Plus Postage. PC Not Available from EDRS.
DESCRIPTORS Change Strategies; Community Colleges; *Educational Change; Educational Development; Educational Planning; Institutional Mission; Institutional Role; *Institutional Survival; Leadership; Long Range Planning; Two Year Colleges
IDENTIFIERS *Columbus State Community College OH

ABSTRACT

This presentation shares how Columbus State Community College (Ohio) has embarked upon a process of transformation into a learning organization positioned to meet the demands of change. The presentation begins with background summaries for the three presenters. It then discusses the rationale for change, stating that as we look at the changes community colleges are called upon to make in relationship to the demands of the communities they serve, three imperatives are pervasive. The first is the demand for a knowledgeable workforce that continues to upgrade its knowledge and skills. The second is the need to develop a learning college that has the internal capacity to respond quickly and flexibly to emerging and anticipated demands for education and services. Third, colleges must have the ability to fully utilize the potential of technology to enhance learning, operations, and services. The presentation also lists three main themes that will be evident in a change of this magnitude: a new college culture, a new leadership, and evidence of a change process. It reviews the leadership process used to begin the transformation, the structure and initiatives that are in place currently, and closes with a summary of observations regarding the process. (VWC)

* Reproductions supplied by EDRS are the best that can be made *
* from the original document. *

1999 Annual International Conference The Chair Academy

Presentation Title: Can a College Structure Enhance Learning?

Presented By: Dr. M. Valeriana Moeller, President
Columbus State Community College

Dr. R. Michael Snider, Provost
Columbus State Community College

Ms. Polly Owen, Chair
Nursing and Related Services
Columbus State Community College

Columbus State Community College
550 East Spring Street
P.O. Box 1609
Columbus, Ohio 43216-1609

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION
Office of Educational Research and Improvement
EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES INFORMATION
CENTER (ERIC)

☒ This document has been reproduced as
received from the person or organization
originating it.

☐ Minor changes have been made to
improve reproduction quality.

• Points of view or opinions stated in this
document do not necessarily represent
official OERI position or policy.

M. Moeller

2A

Presenters

M. Valeriana Moeller, Ph.D.

Dr. Valeriana Moeller is President of Columbus State Community College, Columbus, Ohio. With one main downtown campus and eight off-campus locations, Columbus State enrolls in excess of 18,000 students. Her experience as a college administrator includes positions as Executive Vice Present and Provost of Lansing Community College, Lansing Michigan, and Dean of Instruction and Dean of Academic and Financial Affairs at Minneapolis Community College, Minneapolis, Minnesota. Commitment to the mission of the comprehensive community college is evident in the leadership she provides to numerous professional organizations. Her presentations at local, national and international conferences include workshops on organizational change, strategic planning, leadership, diversity and international education.

R. Michael Snider, Ph.D.

Dr. Snider serves as Provost, Columbus State Community College. In this position he is responsible for the reorganization of Academic Affairs, Student Services, Business and Industry Training Division and Tech Pep into the Learning Systems. The Learning System includes 44 administrators, 209 full-time faculty and 18,000 students. His responsibilities include chairing the Redefining Faculty Role Committee and the Policy and Procedures Committee. Dr. Snider has been associated with Columbus State Community College since October 1973 when he began his career as Chairperson of Respiratory Therapy. Dr. Snider won the Ohio Association of Two Year Colleges 1996-97 Outstanding Administrator of the Year award. He currently serves on the boards of numerous community agencies.

Polly Owen, M.S. MN, C.

Ms. Owen has served as Chairperson, Nursing and Related Services, Columbus State Community College since 1995. In this role she is responsible for program administration, budgeting, accreditation, regulatory board interaction and faculty support of the Nursing, Multi-Competency Health and Surgical Technology Programs. With a professional background as a nurse, faculty person and now chairperson, Ms. Owen has the perspective needed to understand the relationship between community needs and educational programs. In these roles she has observed the impact of change on the health profession, the consumers of health services and on education for health careers. Her recent professional presentations include the *Changing Curriculum for Changing Demands in Health Care, Emerging Educational and Workforce Opportunities and Changing Roles of Women in Science*.

The purpose of this presentation is to share how Columbus State

Community College has embarked upon a process of transformation to a learning organization positioned to meet the demands of change. It reviews the rationale for change, the leadership process used to begin the transformation, and finally, the structure and initiatives that are in place currently. It closes with a summary of observations regarding the process.

Rationale

To remain viable in the next century, colleges must respond to market needs or face declining enrollment, decreased funding, and economic demise. Like other institutions entering the 21st century, they are players in a highly competitive, market-driven economy in which each college must identify its niche; analyze its competitors' strengths; offer the best services in the most economic, efficient, and convenient manner; and expand and strengthen bases of economic and constituent support for future growth and development (Roueche and Roueche, 1998). This sounds like a tall order, but the forces for change in the role of community colleges in higher education are very evident.

As we look at the changes community colleges are called upon to make in relationship to the demands of the communities they serve, three imperatives are pervasive. The first is the demand for a knowledge workforce that continues to upgrade its knowledge and skill. The second is the need to develop a learning college that has the internal capacity to respond quickly and flexibly to emerging and anticipated demands for education and services. Third, colleges must have the ability to fully utilize the potential of technology to enhance learning, operations, and services.

Knowledge Workforce - Workforce training has been the hallmark of community colleges. Davis and Botkin (1994) identify that the number of corporate employees receiving formal, budgeted training in 1992 grew by nearly four million people. On an average, each of these people had 31.5 classroom contact hours annually. If this kind of growth occurred in higher education, it would be equivalent to almost a quarter-million additional full-time college students. Today, workforce training requires the continuous development of a knowledge worker. This is only possible through partnerships with community businesses and industries to provide specific education and training.

Serving the needs of the knowledge worker as well as the new worker will require an educational institution that identifies community needs and then delivers appropriate programs in many formats, as needed, and with little lead time. O'Banion (1997) describes this type of institution as the learning college. He describes the learning college as one that engages learners as partners in the learning process, with the learner assuming primary responsibility for his or her own choices. In this college, educational experiences are designed for the convenience of the learner rather than for the convenience of the institution and its staff.

Senge (1990) states that all members of a learning organization actively engage in learning, both independently and in groups. He describes this organization as one in which people continually expand their capacity to create

the results they truly desire, where new and expansive patterns of thinking are nurtured, where collective aspiration is set free, and where people are continually learning how to learn together. Therefore, in a learning college, faculty, staff, administration, and students are partners in a learning process.

Ability to Utilize the Potential of Technology - Community colleges face both the opportunities provided by changing technology and the challenges of not only learning to utilize technology, but also preparing technically literate students and workers. Technology is the cornerstone of the learning college in that it frees learning from the constraints of time and place. It offers the flexibility to deliver education to business and industry and to off-site locations, when and how it can be used best. Planned integration of technology throughout the campus and to off-campus learning sites is a teaching strategy and a learning mandate for all faculty, staff, and administrators.

Change Themes

More than minor program adjustments are indicated for any community college that undertakes the changes that have been described. Three main themes will be evident in a change of this magnitude: a new college culture, a new leadership, and evidence of a change process. The culture of the college will be affected as members are asked to examine their beliefs about education and to engage in a different paradigm for developing and delivering education. Leadership will be necessary to guide the college vision and the evolution of the learning organization. Finally, a process for change must be implemented. The process chosen by the community college will be most important. It is the process that makes or breaks the success of the change process.

Leadership for Transformation

In July 1996, the new President of Columbus State Community College faced both the opportunity and responsibility of assessing where the college was in relationship to the trends and challenges evident nationally and locally. One responsibility of leadership is to develop both the vision and the operations that will enable a college to meet the needs of its community.

Working with Board of Trustees the administration began by developing a Vision for Columbus State. To arrive at a Vision statement it was necessary to state college values and identify the trends impacting the institution. The vision for Columbus State has nine facets. They are: to insure access, to expand the use of technology in the classroom and administration, to be open to the community, to understand global perspectives, to respond to workforce development, to develop the human capacity of employees of the college, to increase our resources, to improve the college image and marketplace, and to exert financial stewardship.

Having stated the Vision, the next step was to make it a reality. The organizational structure was not conducive to bringing the Vision to life. It lacked flexibility and responsiveness. Flexible organizational structures facilitate

learning and engage the organization in moving through the technical, cultural, and procedural elements of change. Upon reflection, it was apparent that the restructuring process would consist of an interplay of two phases. The first would be deciding on and selling a new structure. This phase would be followed by developing the relationships within the structure. This process would begin at the macro level of the college and then move to major divisions.

The new structure was designed to increase flexibility and responsiveness, to better utilize technology, and to broaden the knowledge and skills of our employees. The following table illustrates the old and the new structures.

Old Structure	New Structure
Academic Affairs Student Services Business and Industry	Learning Systems
Administrative Services	Administrative Services
Data Center (in Administrative Services) Research and Planning Educational Resource Center (in Academic Affairs)	Information Technology
Public Relations Telephone Information Center (in Administrative Services)	Marketing and Communications
Development Office	Development Office
Minority Affairs EEO (in Administrative Services)	Multi-cultural Affairs and Community Outreach

Once the broad picture was set, each division was given a charter to create its internal divisional structure. In each division, the process was to engage all employees in a process of learning about what functions need to be provided, the talent of the persons in the division, and to take responsibility for developing a way to work most effectively. We will describe the process of developing the Learning Systems Division.

Implementing the Process of Transformation at Columbus State

During the spring of 1997, the President announced that under the

umbrella concept of Learning Systems, three previously distinct administrative units would be brought together. In addition, new departments designed to meet emerging needs of the community would be created. With the framework of college Vision, Values, Trends, and Goals, and a conceptual framework of a Learning System, 80 employees (representing faculty, staff and administration) met in July to begin the process of restructuring. At a one-day retreat, the actual movement toward a Learning System began.

It was essential that at this earliest step that college history was honored and that individuals were honored in terms of their special contributions to the college. An initial restructuring plan was set forth. Again, the plan initiated a process. Eight teams, each representative of the former administrative units, were formed and assigned the task of developing an ideal structure to achieve the following outcomes:

1. Increased flexibility and responsiveness to workforce needs
2. Deeper involvement in the enrichment/interest niches of the community
3. Increased learner-friendliness and clarity of access for learners
4. Deeper, smoother K-12 supplier/customer chains and partnerships
5. Demonstrated continuous improvement in teaching/learning practice

Teams were to honor the following principles:

1. Accomplish the goals within existing staffing and resource constraints
2. Offer meaningful work to all people now employed in Learning Systems
3. Be accountable at the Learning Systems level for the outcomes above
4. Fix systems, not blame

The teams had six weeks to submit their reports to a coordinating body called the Provost Council. The Council consisted of the Provost, Associate Provost, two Deans, and four Administrators. During the next six weeks, groups met to discuss the change process, to ask for clarification, and to try out ideas. At the end of six weeks each of the eight teams submitted a document detailing their ideal structure and presented this structure to the Council.

The next step was for the Council to study each of the proposals, discuss their relative strengths and unique features, combine features, and develop a proposed structure for the Learning Systems. At this stage the structure defined functions and did not assign individuals to roles. Secondly, it called for the creation of new functions and the reduction of the number of technical divisions. However, the finer detail of the substructure was not defined.

Three campus forums were held in order to give all college employees an opportunity to ask questions, seek clarification, and discuss the model. Both individuals and departments were encouraged to submit their ideas, suggestion, and reactions in writing. Written remarks, as well as minutes from the forums, were reviewed by the Council. The Council met with the President and then submitted the final Learning System Organization Plan to the campus.

Today, Learning Systems consists of five divisions. Arts and Sciences

consists of all arts and sciences course work. Career and Technical Programs centralizes curricular issues for professional, technical, and career-related programs. Student Services is organized into two categories: enrollment services, which encompasses functions dealing with intake; and student life, which provides programs and services to support and enhance students' academic experience. Instructional Services supports the entire academic program by providing leadership and coordination in curriculum management, faculty development, distance learning, the student success center, and developmental education. Finally, the Community Education and Workforce Development Division serves the current workforce, the transitional workforce (those preparing for their first job), and entrepreneurial workforce learners.

Summary Observations

This process continues to evolve. The new structure has given us the flexibility to respond to community needs and develop strategies to improve access for everyone. Our visibility in the community is greater, and as a result we have been successful in increasing our fund-raising efforts. Cultural changes are at a smaller scale but are reflected in open communication and inclusion of personnel across the different college ranks. There is excitement on campus, despite some resistance to change. The newly formed College Council has representation from faculty, administration, staff, and students. There, issues are discussed openly, and minutes from that discussion are distributed campus-wide.